

Eye to Eye by kirabook

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Summary:

The two children with the strongest ties meet at last.

Spring 1985

Eye to Eye

Author's Note:

A Will and Eleven siblings fic. You guys, they have so much in common. I'll be sad if we don't have a meaningful meeting between these two. They are just.... My babies.

I've been craving Will and Eleven action and THIS post by @willthewisest finally pushed me to do my own thing. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH GUYS, I NEED MOAR. PLZ. *cries* Please?

<http://willthewisest.tumblr.com/post/168056912141>

“Mom mom, I’ll be fine.” Will stressed. Although he and his mother were the same height now, he felt shorter again while sitting on his brand new bike. His old one had gone unused for so long, the chain rusted out. It was more affordable to just buy a new one. A new one that he pledged to start riding every day just like he used to.

“I know I know, but...” Joyce held her arms nervously glancing from side to side. Nearly two years had passed since her son went missing, lost in the Upside Down. Five months passed since the Upside Down came back to take him again. She knew she should relax and give him more space. More freedom. She knew she needed to let him grow up and be independent but... it was hard. Very hard. Even Jonathan behind her was nervous, but he hid it better.

“I went to Mike’s house yesterday and it was ok, right?” Will explained. He was in no rush to go to Mike’s house, so he spent the extra time reassuring his mom that everything would be ok. For her sake. And for Jonathan’s sake. And, his own sake really. He’d be lying if he pretended not to constantly be eyeing his surroundings like a madman, flinching at the smallest rustle or chirp from yards or the forest surrounding the road to his house.

He was a high school student now. The past is the past. He wanted to move on and be “normal” again. Not completely normal of course.

That was a pipe dream. And there was nothing wrong with being a freak, as Jonathan put it. At the very least, he wanted to ride his bike with his friends again. Go out and come back when he pleased. Jonathan and his mom weren't always around to drive him wherever. It stressed them all out.

"If you feel nervous or scared at all, AT ALL, you can come back home ok? We'll still be here. Or if you need us to pick you up, you can call us from-"

"I know mom. I'll call you as soon as I get there and as soon as I decide to come back. Ok?"

Joyce tried to relax. "Alright baby." Jonathan stepped forward and rubbed her shoulder. "Have fun." Will nodded... but didn't attempt to leave. He stared blankly at Joyce and Jonathan with the smallest twitch of a nervous smile. He almost looked frozen.

"... Will? You sure you're ready?" Jonathan asked. He and Will were similar. Jonathan would rather keep his feelings to himself to spare everyone else the worry. It worked pretty well for him. People rarely knew what he was feeling, for better or for worse. The only one who could pick him apart in seconds was his mother... but Nancy wasn't far behind nowadays.

Will wasn't as good at hiding his feelings. On the inside, Will was just as nervous as their mother. Another moment passed before Will took a deep breath and shook his head, finally lifting his feet off the ground to peddle away.

"See you later!" Will called after he reached a good distance down their driveway.

In the grand scheme of things, Mike's house wasn't that far. Nowhere was far in the small town of Hawkins, Indiana. It was a blessing and a curse. He could ride anywhere on his bike and arrive in a short amount of time. That also meant it was much harder to find a place to hide since a pursuer didn't have many areas to search. He learned that first hand.

Will shook his head and frowned. He did his best to ignore the

intrusive memories and survival instincts he developed from his time in the upside down. He didn't realize how bad the thoughts were until he started considering going out on his own again without his friends or family. He didn't argue about his mom or brother picking him up and dropping him off at school or the arcade or wherever else he wanted to go for the longest time. He didn't want to be alone. It was... scary.

He was scared. His sweaty palms and goosebumps riding up his neck was the undeniable evidence. He gripped his handlebars tighter and increased the speed of his peddling. Maybe if he peddled fast enough, he could escape the chill running up his spine.

'Nothing is out there.' Will insisted as he took a deep breath. *'Nothing. Nothing is there.'* He repeated. If you tell yourself something enough times, surely it would come true, right?

Will focused on the street in front of him, refusing to scan the forests and yards until he reached Mike's house. Relief washed over him when the house finally came into view. He wasted no time parking his bike in Mike's garage and rushing to the front door. The sooner he got inside the better. Will barely had time to ring the doorbell before the door swung open. Mike blinked and seemed relieved. He must've been nervous too.

"Good, you're finally here." Mike stepped aside, letting Will inside.

"Finally?" Will glanced at his watch. He got there in record time, especially since he didn't make any stops along the way. "It didn't take me that long,"

"Yeah, but your mom has already called twice looking for you." Will and Mike walked to the kitchen as Will released an embarrassed chuckle. "Here." Mike push the phone to Will, knowing that he'd need to call Joyce or she would just call herself again.

Will sighed. As he dialed his house, briefly wondered how many times he sighed that day and if it would become annoying for others. He needed to rein that in. If his mother noticed, she might realize something is wrong or make assumptions at least. He remembered when she first discovered he was having visions of the Upside Down

after he returned. It happened in the middle of the day and startled him so bad he started screaming. She was right there, and there was no way to hide the visions after that.

“Will?? Will is that you? Can you hear me?” He blinked. He completely forgot that he dialed his mother and that she was nervously waiting on the other end.

“Yeah, yeah it’s me. Sorry. I made it to Mike’s house.”

“Are you alright...?” As always, she sounded so concerned and worried. Will absently wondered if she would ever become “normal” again too or if her anxiety would continue to chip away at her now all thanks to him.

“Yeah, I’m ok. Really. I’ll call you again when I leave, ok?” He tried to sound as reassuring and confident as possible to put her at ease.

“Remember don’t leave too late. Come back before it gets dark. If it’s too dark, CALL me ask for a ride, ok?”

“Ok, mom.”

“Have fun sweetie.” She finished. Will hung up the phone and glanced at Mike. He stood at the counter preparing snack dishes and drinks. Normally Mike’s mother would make their snacks, but Mike’s parents were out tonight and Nancy was babysitting Holly upstairs.

“You can go downstairs without me,” Mike explained without looking over. “Dustin and Lucas aren’t here yet.”

“What are we doing tonight anyway. Are we doing the campaign today, or playing a game?” Will removed his coat and placed it on a chair nearby.

“Probably both.” Mike shrugged. “You can set up down there if you want to. El wouldn’t know how.” Will blinked in surprise.

“El is here?”

Mike turned and frowned, but then his eyebrows shot up. “Oh, that’s right. You left early the other day... El is visiting for the first time.

And, not for the last time.” A slight grin spread across his lips. Not very surprising, Will thought. Mike was quite enamored with her. Will smiled too.

“It’s finally safe?”

“Yep. At least, it is for now. Hopper dropped her off not too long ago and she can stay for a few hours.”

Will nodded, and turned to head down to the basement.

“Hey, Will?”

“Yeah?” Will stopped just short of the basement stairs and turned back. Mike looked... concerned. “What is it?”

“Act natural. It’ll be fine.” Mike gave a reassuring nod then turned back to the snacks on the counter, pouring more chips into a bowl.

Will looked down into the basement from the top of the stairs, pausing his descent. He hadn’t realized it before but... he hardly spoke to Eleven face to face. This would be the first time they truly hung out. Will slowly came down the stairs and scanned the room as more of the room came into view.

Eleven lay on the couch, quietly tinkering with Mike’s Millennium Falcon. When a stair creaked beneath his foot, Eleven glanced over. Her eyes widened the slightest bit as she sat up and put the toy aside. Will stopped when their eyes met.

Will and El weren’t exactly strangers. El wasn’t allowed to come out very often, but that didn’t stop her from communicating with them. Every day after school they contacted El on the AV club radio. Mike even bought a new more powerful radio for his basement to communicate with her whenever. He did all kinds of chores and mowed lawns with Lucas until he had enough to buy the radio himself. A far cry from stealing money from Nancy.

Talking on a radio didn’t compare to meeting El face to face, but Will felt like he knew her well enough even though he wasn’t the one having many conversations with her. Afterall, they had a different kind of connection. A special one.

“Hi, El.” Will said, completing his descent down the stairs.

“Hi Will.” She replied. Will came to sit next to her. He leaned deep into the couch, completely forgetting about setting up for the campaign or the games they were going to be playing.

Neither of them said anything else. The room was quiet, but not awkwardly so. It was strangely comforting. El glanced over at Will, and in return, he glanced over at her. It was the first time they got a good look at each other.

The first two times El met him, he was worse for ware. Pale, sickly, and barely conscious or not conscious at all. It was hard to reach him in the Upside Down. It was hard to reach him when the Mind Flayer took possession of him in every way imaginable, so much so, there was little of him left at all. El reached out and poked his cheek. It startled him at first because it was so sudden. He gave a closed smile, but let her poke as she wanted. She smiled too. She backed away looking satisfied about something. Will could only guess what exactly.

“How are you?” He asked.

“Good.” El nodded. A comfortable silence enveloped them again. “... And you? How are you?” Will turned away and paused.

“Good.” Will nodded, mimicking her as he rubbed his hands together. Will started when El’s hand clamped over his. El was very expressive with her face, and she looked unconvinced.

A small feeling of annoyance flashed through him. He understood everyone’s concern for him, but he didn’t want to be babied. He biked here by himself after all. It kinda freaked him out, but he made it. He pushed through. As quickly as the annoyance came, it faded away and turned into something else. She knew. She knew something. Some of his secrets. Now that they were face to face, secrets were hard to keep. Now he was feeling nervous.

Will sighed once again and El tilted her head quizzically. Will released his tight grip on his own hands and gently grasped hers. Her hand felt familiar for some reason.

“Can you... promise not to tell?” Will glanced towards the stairs. Mike still seemed distracted upstairs and Dustin and Lucas were running late. “I... don’t want to tell the others. Not yet.”

“Promise.” El nearly interrupted him before he could finish. Their met eyes. Will turned to face her and she did the same.

“I don’t know how much you know since we haven’t talked much but... I’ll try to explain.” Will spoke quietly so his voice wouldn’t carry upstairs. “Last year... well... ever since I got stuck in the Upside Down and came back... I used to have these visions of the Upside Down. ‘Truesight’. I could see into the Upside Down even if I didn’t want to... it’s how the Mind Flayer got me.”

El nodded. “I know.”

“Thankfully... I don’t get them anymore. Not completely anyway.” Will paused as he collected his thoughts. El was still learning vocabulary and he didn’t want to confuse her. Not on a subject like this. “Sometimes... I still see things. Or feel things. It’s like... I’m on the surface now but just barely... understand?”

El watched Will’s face. Then she looked down at their hands. Then she glanced around the room as her brows furrowed deeply in thought.

“Once... Mike told me that... this place is like a... tightrope.” El gave up searching the room for something and released Will’s hand, trying to demonstrate with gestures as she recalled the lecture. Normal people... they stay on the tightrope. But, then there is a flea that doesn’t always stay on the tightrope.”

“Right... I remember.”

El lowered her hands, pointing to herself. I am a flea... and now...” She pointed to Will.

“So are you.” Will glanced down and pressed his hands together again. El watched him, wondering if it were a habit. She gently placed her hand on top of his again, trying to reassure him. “But... that’s ok now, right? The Mind Flayer is gone.”

“... He’s not.” Will whispered.

“But... we closed the gate.” El explained. Will nodded, but then shook his head.

“Yes but... that just locked him out of our world and killed all his monsters... he’s still there. In the Upside down... but he’s still here too.”

“Where?” El’s eyes widened in surprise. Maybe a little fear? He was certainly a little fearful too.

“I still feel him...” Will looked up at the ceiling, but his mind went beyond that. To a place far above the clouds that was plenty cold and plenty empty. “A piece of him that was in me... it’s waiting up there. Waiting for something.” Will shrugged nervously. “But it hasn’t done anything all year so far.”

“How do you know?” El asked.

“Because...” Will looked down to meet her eyes. “A piece of him... some of him is still in me too. I’m worried that... if I fall... if I go under like the flea... he could get me again.” El’s mouth hung open, unsure of what to say. If that’s true, wouldn’t closing the gate have killed him? How was he still himself? Will guessed what her questions might be, so he continued.

“It’s not like it was before. I can tell. There’s only a little left. Before it was like... I was lost in a dark cloud. The more he controlled, the cloudier it got. The less I could see or feel or think. But now... I can’t see what he’s seeing anymore. I don’t feel what he’s feeling. The now memories are gone. I feel like myself again and there aren’t any clouds. All that’s left... is this ... sensation of knowing where he is. He’s in the sky somewhere... usually following me... but sometimes, he follows you too.”

“He’s just... waiting.” He finished.

“Waiting... for a gate.” El concluded. She wasn’t naive enough to think the creature would just go back to where it belonged if another gate opened. “It wants... to come back here.”

“Yeah... probably.”

“... What will happen if there is another gate?” El posed the question though she partially knew the answer. The last ordeal was enough evidence to make a solid conclusion.

“You know,” Will answered. “He’ll want to kill everything. He’ll come for me again... and he’ll come for you too.”

This time, the silence in the basement was slightly uncomfortable. Like a cold unwelcome air entered the room and wrapped all around them. Instead of looking at each other eye to eye, they looked at their hands. At least their warm hands beat back the sudden chill.

“When I closed the gate... the Mind Flayer tried to stop me.” El explained. “But, I was able to make him go away. I closed the gate.” Will’s eyes glistened and he sat slightly straighter as she spoke. “If he comes again, I can stop him... we can stop him, Will. We know how.”

“There’s not much I can do...”

“You can.” El tried to meet his eyes, but Will was quite focused on looking down at their hands instead. “You can feel him. You will know when a gate opens, and you can warn us.”

“... You think so? Will that really help?”

“Yes.”

Finally, Will seemed to accept that and refocused on her face.

“...Alright.” Will smiled timidly, but El saw bravery in those eyes of his. Will was always so brave. “We’ll warn them if a new gate appears... We’ll protect everyone, together.”

As El looked from one hazel eye to another... she saw a reflection of herself. She saw the vague outline of her face and her hair... but she also saw her past.

She and Will had lived such different lives, yet it was still so strikingly similar. She was taken away from her mother by a terrifying monster named ‘Papa’, just like Will had been taken by the

Demogorgon to a dimension unknown.

‘Papa’ controlled her every move. Her every thought. Her everything. Disobedience meant punishment and pain. They hurt her. Will had everything taken from him by *him*. His thoughts. His feelings. His mind. Even his body. They were used to kill. To spy. To bring terrible creatures into their world.

A terrifying beast named ‘Papa’ still waited out there somewhere in the world, waiting for his opportunity to strike. Maybe waiting for an opportunity to take her away again. Always waiting and searching for her. Will lived in fear every day, wondering what the Mind Flayer waiting in the sky wanted to do with him next. Anxiously hoping another gate would never open and allow the Mind Flayer to take him again.

She thought about her sister, Kali. Number 8. Kali used all her fear and anger to exact revenge on people like ‘Papa’. For a while, Eleven thought she could do the same. They hurt her. They hurt ‘Mama’. If given the opportunity, they would hurt all of her friends... but in the end, she wasn’t like Kali. She couldn’t use her anger to hurt them and hurt them. She didn’t care about them.

Will felt the same way she did. Even when fear seized his whole body, Will bravely made it through. That night when he told them to close the gate, Will would have died for them if it meant stopping the Mind Flayer. Their friends wouldn’t understand his feelings, but she certainly did. Whatever power she had... she’d use it to protect her friends. Even if it killed her. She held his slightly calloused hand, and not for the first time. But this was the first time he was able to hold hers back.

El smiled again, but this time a contagious chuckle accompanied it.

“What’s so funny?” Will asked, but he chuckled too. El reached up and ruffled his bangs.

“Brother.” She stated simply.

“**GOD DAMMIT!**” Dustin’s loud voice nearly shocked them to death. They turned toward the stairs as a waterfall of Cheetos rolled down

step by step.

“Dustin! I told you to be careful!” Mike shouted angrily. Lucas behind them rolled his eyes and Max smirked at the scene unfolding before her. Dustin and Mike were carrying down the tray of food Mike prepared so meticulously. Sadly, the Cheetos didn’t make it.

“Told you to let me carry it, Mike.” Lucas started to pick up the Cheetos to make sure they weren’t stepped on and rubbed the stairs with their feet. Mike grunted and placed a tray of food on the empty table before glancing around the room.

“Will?? I thought you were going to get everything ready?”

Will blinked in confusion, then sprung from the couch. “Oh right! I forgot. Sorry. I guess we were chatting too long.”

“Now we’re way behind schedule,” Mike complained.

“Ah chill out Mike. We’ll just play a game first and then set up the campaign. It’s not a big deal.” Dustin set down the half-empty tray of food and took a seat at the table.

“It’s kind of a big deal that you spilled Cheetos on the stairs too! Now I have to vacuum first!”

“Well,” Max started. “We’re picking up the Cheetos. Doesn’t look like there are any crumbs to even vacuum.”

“Yeah to you it doesn’t.” Mike rolled his eyes. “My mom will still know that Cheetos got spilled on the floor somehow.”

Will shook his head as he set up the TV. Some squabbling was going to break out no doubt. Will glanced over towards El. She was in a similar state of disinterest toward the squabbling over Cheetos on the stairs. Her deadpanned look was pretty funny to witness.

‘Brother’, she said. What did that mean? Does she see him as a brother?

... Well, he always wondered what having a sister would be like.

Author's Note:

Thank you for reading! This might not be the end of this fic. If I come up with a season 3 of my own, then it'll continue~